SCRIPTS BITS! – SPECIAL EDITION
The Road to Year One – Part One

It was March of 2006 when *Sonic the Hedgehog #160* hit the shelves. Its lead story, "Birthday Bash!," was my debut on the Sonic scene as the new lead writer. It was a very exciting time for me and for a number of Sonic readers who'd known me for my works in the fandom. What most didn't know at that point was I'd been among the staff for five months already. Four years before *that* I was still applying to become a writer for the title.

The first application was an abysmal failure for many good reasons. The scripts were unpolished, there was no letters of intent or recommendation, and I didn't provide the pivotal self-addressed and stamped envelope. Newbie mistakes and I learned from them. The scripts were revised and new applications were made and sent. It wasn't until October of 2005 that editor Mike Pellerito took a chance with a college undergraduate and showed him the ropes. What was it in that final application package that caught his eye?

Now you get to find out.

It's January 2007 and we're fast approaching my thirteenth consecutive issue on *Sonic the Hedgehog* – my first full year on the comic. To commemorate coming full circle I'll be doing three sets of special Script Bits! You'll be able to see what got me in the door and, in comparison to the other Script Bits!, see just how far I came since I joined the team in 2006.

The added bonus is that you will be able to see **the entire scripts.** These scripts will never be published and all of the plot points in them have been rendered moot or have already evolved into stories you've seen. As with all Script Bits!, I'll go into some detail and try to provide some insight into the scripts. This month's edition will feature the two five-page back-ups I submitted in the final application package. You'll find the material on the following pages:

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Remembering "The Rescue"

One of the things I tried to demonstrate with all of my scripts was a command of Sonic trivia. "Loose Continuity" was the new taboo buzz-word within the fandom and I wanted to show I was very intent on keeping things tight. One of the things I would learn down the road was that there are some plotlines that are old enough to be left alone.

This script was also to show how I would set-up a multi-part story. I had tossed around the idea of showing a "part two" or "part three" to show I could continue such a story, but without showing an entire arc it wouldn't quite get the idea across. I also didn't want to inundate the editor since I'd learned by then that they are very busy people. Too little material, though, and I wouldn't leave enough of an impression. All this thought on the subject, and we haven't even got to the meat of the script!

One of the things I really enjoyed about the book was the alternate teams. Geoffrey St. John's elite squad had just recently been defeated in a number of ways and the oft-forgotten Substitute Legion of Freedom Fighters hadn't so much as seen a cameo since "Sonic Live!" I wanted to bring them back into active duty, beginning with this story.

I also wanted to bring back Valdez to some degree. I've forgotten what those plans were, but at the time I believe they were to have him rejoin the heroes. I've also forgotten who the "second team" was going after the Sword of Acorns, or what my plans were for St. John. At the time, St. John was a fairly prominent character and seemed to have some ominous overtones building around him. Now he's pretty much faded into the background. Funny how things work out, isn't it?

One of the weak points of this story is it's mostly flashback without enough forward momentum. This entire exchange could've been handled in a single page of flashback as the Substitute Legion was actively pursuing their mission. It's also rather cluttered with characters, most of them contributing very little to the story. A better approach would've been having Larry meet with St. John, freeing the artist up a great deal more.

Before we move on to the actual script, I'd like to point out a few formatting elements. I took the liberty of editing it *slightly* to remove huge gaps between sections of the script. These were initially intended to have the manuscript print cleanly on one page each. It doesn't work like that and ended up making the electronic file look messy. That's all that has been changed, however, so you will see the writing style I went in with. This is what I'd learned off the limited scripting resources I'd researched before composing these scripts. Be prepared for lots of capital letters! Oh, and typos. Holy mackerel look out for the typos.

Title: The Rescue: Part One of Three
Pages: 5 pages

Page 1

[Panel 1]

A long hospital room in Knothole Village. We see the memebers of King Acorn's Secret Service all in hospital gowns and bed-ridden. Geoffrey St. John is closest to the door. Further into the room is Hershey, while Wombat Stu dozes furthest back, his bed partially hidden by a seperating curtain. Hershey is reading a book while St. John looks as those he's expecting company.

St John frowns in contemplation.

[Panel 2]

St. John looks up, pleased.

Voice from off-panel: YOU WANTED TO SEE US, COMMANDER ST. JOHN?

St. John: RIGHT YOU ARE, MATE!

[Panel 3]

From behind St. John, we see Larry Lynx, Hamlin Pig, Dylan Porcupine, Penelope Platypus, Arlo Armadillo and Ceril the Eagle entering into the room. This is a wide shot, taking up the rest of the page.

St. John: " COME IN, **SUBSTITUTE LEGION OF FREEDOM FIGHTERS!***"
(* The bold text is in a larger, bolder text, perhaps with a checkered texture.)

Dialouge Box: *REMEMBER THESE GUYS FROM BACK IN SUPER SPECIAL #2?

Page 2

[Panel 1]

Hamlin crosses his arms and looks indignant, while Penelope looks more inquisitive.

Hamlin: *SNORT!* IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE WE'VE SEEN ANY ACTION.

Penelope: WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO SEE US, SIR?

[Panel 2]

St. John's face hardens. We see him over the sillouhetted backs of the Substitute Legion.

St. John: AS YOU KNOW, MY TEAM HAS BEEN TAKEN OUT OF ACTION...

[Panel 3]
We get a close-up, 3/4ths of St. John's face as the scenes of flashbacks take over.
The flash-back is of Valdez the Chameleon begins overtaken by a pair of large SHADOW-Bots in a dark allyway.

St. John: WHEN DR. ROBOTNIK RETURNED, WE LOST VALDEZ TO THE INVASION FORCE...

[Panel 4]
We get a full panel of flash-back.
The flash-back is of Sonic the Hedgehog Spin-Dashing through Heavy the Robot. The floor is littered with sleeping Bomb the Robots. From a skylight, we can see Tails the Fox and Rotor Walrus on the roof with a large piece of machinerey.

Dialogue Box**:** "HEAVY AND BOMB WERE TURNED INTO DOUBLE-AGENTS BY DR. ROBOTNIK..."

Dialogue Box: "..AND THEY WERE ELIMINATED BY SONIC AND THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS..."

[Panel 5]
The flash-back fades back into a 1/2 view of St. John's saddened face. The flash-back is off Stu, Hershey and St. John buckling from internal pain in King Acorn's palace.

St. John: "...WHILE THE REST OF THE TEAM AND I WERE TAKEN DOWN BY THE DOCTOR'S NANITES!"

[Panel 6]
St. John is very serious. The team listens somberly.

St. John: WHILE **FIVE** ARE DOWN, THERE MAY BE A CHANCE TO **SAVE** ONE.
Page 3

[Panel 1] St. John explains to the startled group.

St. John: I WAS ABLE TO GET A SLIVER OF INFORMATION ABOUT VALDEZ. HE WAS ROBOTICIZED AND SENT TO THE FLOATING ISLAND TO CAPTURE THE INHABITANTS AND FIND THE CHAOS EMERALD. OBVIOUSLY, VALDEZ FAILED.

[Panel 2] Arlo looks confused. We see Hershey is only pretending to read as she listens in. Larry scratches his head, baffled. Ceril retains his sagely demenor.

Arlo: SO...WHAT SHOULD **WE** DO?

St. John: I WANT YOU TO GO TO THE FLOATING ISLAND AND RECOVER AGENT VALDEZ!

Larry: BUT IF HE'S BEEN ROBOTICIZED, HE'LL FIGHT US!

Ceril: TRUE. IF ONLY THE PRINCESS STILL HELD THE **SWORD OF ACORNS**...

[Panel 3]

St. John address the group with a smile in a quiet, reserved way. He's hiding something.. Hershey looks mildly confused.

St. John: DON'T YOU WORRY ABOUT THAT, MATE. I'VE ALREADY SENT A SECOND TEAM TO RETRIEVE IT. THEY'LL MEET YOU ON THE FLOATING ISLAND.

[Panel 4]

Hamlin punches one fist into his other hand, looking confident. Penelope and Arlo converse excitedly.

Hamlin: YEAH! NO SWEAT!

Arlo: NOW YOU CAN PUT YOUR PILOTING PRACTICE TO WORK, PENELOPE!

Penelope: YEAH!

[Panel 5]

The group salutes St. John confidently. St. John salutes them back.

Larry: YOU CAN COUNT ON US, SIR!

St. John: I KNOW I CAN. DISMISSED!
Page 4

[Panel 1] The group excitedly files out of the room.

[Panel 2]

We see St. John smiling oddly, as if he's thinking of something secret. Behind him, we see Hershey looking concerned.

Hershey: SIR?

[Panel 3] St. John turns to face Hershey. Overhead shot of the two conversing.

St. John: YES, HERSHEY?

Hershey: DO YOU THINK IT'S A GOOD IDEA, SENDING THEM?

[Panel 4]

We're on level with the two and can see them from the waiste up with the appropriate space between them. Hershey looks concerned while St. John is quite the opposite.

St. John: WHAT DO YOU MEA? THEY'LL BE FINE!

Hershey: BUT THEY'RE AN VERY INEXPERIENCED TEAM!

[Panel 5]

Same arrangement as before, but with St. John looking displeased.

Hershey: DO YOU HAVE THE AUTHORIZATION TO SEND THEM ON SUCH A MISSION? AND WHO'S IN THE SECOND TEAM GOING AFTER THE SWORD...?

[Panel 6]

St. John violently draws the privacy curtain between the two of them.

Page 5

[Panel 1]

Full page shot of the room. The curtain divides Hershey and St. John, the latter seen as a silhouette. St. John's shadow bows it's head.

St. John: DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, LOVE...

Dialogue Box**:** TO BE CONTINUED...!

Remembering "Hopes and Fears"

This story was meant to do three things. The first was the aforementioned demonstration of far-too-much-Sonic-trivia-retention. The second was to do a stand-alone back-up story, and show that I could tell it in five tiny pages. The third was to do something of an emotional piece. I do enjoy my battles and explosions – this *is* an action-adventure series after all – but I wanted to show I could illicit something else.

I chose Hope primarily because she was a ripe target. She'd lost a great deal recently in the comics, was in an unfamiliar setting, and was human. Loss, awkwardness and being human are all readily identifiable traits, and lo, Hope was an easily-accessible character.

Why I chose the nameless robian was two-fold. The first was for the wonderful dichotomy I could play with: a fearsome robot exterior, but another victim that Hope could directly relate to on the inside. The second was I wanted to investigate the roboticization process from the other side. We'd seen countless mobians enslaved, but the few times we got a little bit of insight into their lives it was turned into a throw-away gag. It was a different time for the book, though, and I'm certainly not faulting the writers of the time.

There's a little bit of black humor reading this script after so much has happened in the comic. The nameless robian is now living a normal life in Knothole, Hope may have gone to explore the achievements of her people in the United Federation, and her roboticized family has been reduced to nuclear slag if not atomized out-right. It makes you wonder where we'll be another year down the road, doesn't it?

The very foundation of the story resurfaced much later as "Ties that Bind" in that we are given some time with Hope. She had lost a great deal of innocence since then, but there are a few faint parallels to be had. The story itself remains very solid, I think, but it doesn't really take us anywhere. Hope grows up a trifle, but the overall narrative isn't moved anywhere. This story might've worked as an aside in one issue or as a subplot over the course of a story.

Like the previous script, all I edited out were the big spaced between the page markers. The rest is left for you to learn from and me to smile with some chagrin.

Title: Hopes and Fears
Pages: 5 pages

Page 1

[Panel 1]

Knothole Village. We have a tree-top view of the village. Mobians go about their daily lives: walking along, conversing on the side, carrying bundles. Walking amongst them is Hope, her hands buried in the pockets of her overalls.

Dialogue Box: KNOTHOLE VILLAGE

[Panel 2]

Almost the opposite from before. We're looking up at Hope and the canopy with its huts within the branches. She smiles quietly to herself.

Hope: [thinking] I'M SO GLAD THEY LET ME STAY IN KNOTHOLE. THE TREES AND THE GRASS EVEN THE DIRT IS SO MUCH NICER THAN THOSE SPACESHIPS...

[Panel 3]

As Hope walks along, she accidentally runs into a Robian (see S#108-2nd story-p3)

Hope: [thinking] ...IN FACT, I THINK I COULD GO THE REST OF MY LIFE WITHOUT SEEING ANYTHING ELSE MECHANIC - -

Hope: [aloud] OOF!

[Panel 4]

A foreboding, intense seen. Hope cowers before the Robian, who looks down on her.

Hope: AAAAIEEEE!

Page 2

[Panel 1]

Hope cringes back, covering her face as the Robian reaches towards her.

[Panel 2]

Same scene, only Hope looks surprised as the Robian's hand makes a gentle gesture to help her up.

Robian: ARE YOU OKAY, KIDDO?

[Panel 3]

Hope takes the Robian's hand, somewhat mystified, as it helps her up.

Robian: YOU NEED TO WATCH WHERE YOU'RE WALKING. I'M NOT THE SOFTEST THING YOU COULD RUN INTO AROUND HERE!

Hope: I GUESS SO...

[Panel 4]

Hope gasps in realization, pointing at the Robian. The Robian smiles, amused.

Hope: *GASP!* YOU'RE THAT ROBOTICIZED MOBIAN I RAN INTO IN ROBOTROPOLIS!

Robian: SMALL WORLD, HUH? NOW, ARE YOU OKAY?

[Panel 5]

Hope smiles sheepishly.

Hope: WHA-? OH! YEAH, I'M OKAY! HEE HEE!

Page 3

[Panel 1]

Hope and the Robian walk through Knothole, conversing. The Robian has a quiet demeanor to it. We see a few Robians and Mobians milling about in the background.

Dialogue Box: AND SO...

Hope: SO...DOES IT HURT?

Robian: DOES WHAT HURT?

Hope: BEING...BEING ROBOTICIZED?

Robian: OH, **THAT**...

[Panel 2]
The Robian muses. Hope listens intently.

Robian: WELL...HMM. IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN. YOU KNOW THAT TINGLY FEELING YOU GET WHEN YOUR LEG FALLS ASLEEP?

Hope: YEAH? IS IT LIKE THAT?

Robian: SOMETHING LIKE THAT, ALL OVER YOUR BODY, AND ONLY FOR A MINUTE. THEN THINGS FEEL KIND OF COLD...KIND OF DISTANT.

[Panel 3]
The Robian looks down inquisitively. Hope looks away sadly.

Robian: WHY DO YOU ASK?

Hope: WELL...Y'SEE...MY GRANDMOTHER AND MY DADDY WERE ROBOTICIZED... AND I DIDN'T KNOW IF THEY WERE HURT BY IT...

[Panel 4]
Hope wipes at her eyes with a sleeve. The Robian gently lays a hand on her shoulder.

Hope: ..AND I...I WORRY ABOUT THEM SO MUCH...

Robian: AW...DON'T WORRY, KIDDO. I CAN'T SAY BEING A ROBIAN IS THE BEST THING IN THE WORLD, BUT IT CERTAINLY ISN'T THE WORST.
Page 4

[Panel 1]

Hope turns quickly to the Robian, angry, frustrated and sad. Tears stand in her eyes.

Hope: BUT THEY'RE ROBOTS NOW! THEY CAN'T MOVE, THEY CAN'T TALK - THEY CAN'T DO **ANYTHING!**

[Panel 2]

The Robian kneels in front of Hope, falling just under eye-level with her. It looks her in the eye. It looks sympathetic.

Robian: MAYBE ON THE OUTSIDE, HOPE. BUT ON THE INSIDE, THEY STILL FEEL AND THINK AND LOVE. TRUST ME, I KNOW.

[Panel 3]

Hope, in profile, bows her head, a tear running down her cheek. The Robian leans in, speaking kindly.

Robian: AND AS LONG AS YOU LOVE THEM AND WANT THEM BACK, THERE WILL BE A WAY TO SAVE THEM.

[Panel 4]

Hope dries her tears with success this time. The Robian stands.

Hope: ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THAT?

Robian: POSITIVE. THAT'S THE ONLY REASON ANY OF US ROBIANS ARE IN KNOTHOLE TODAY.

Page 5

[Panel 1]

Hope hugs herself and looks away.

Hope: BUT HOW WILL I BREAK ROBOTNIK'S CONTROL OVER THEM? PRINCESS SALLY GAVE THOSE NINJAS THE SWORD OF ACRORNS - WHICH DIDN'T EVEN WORK ON THEM!

Robian: I DON'T KNOW, HOPE...

[Panel 2]

The Robian and Hope are small in the background. The Robian raises an arm to indicate the milling villagers in the foreground.

Robian: ...BUT THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS WERE AGAINST WORSE ODDS AND HAVE COME THIS FAR...

[Panel 3]

From the Robian's shoulder, we see it look down to Hope. Hope smiles gratefully.

Robian: ...THEN IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME. NEVER FORGET - WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY.

[Panel 4]

To the Robian's surprise, Hope suddenly hugs him warmly.

Hope: YOU'RE RIGHT! I WON'T GIVE UP ON THEM - THEY WOULDN'T GIVE UP ON ME!

Voice from Off-Panel: HOPE! IT'S TIME FOR SUPPER!

[Panel 5]
The Robian stands, 3/4ths of its back to us, waving to Hope. Hope waves back to the Robian as she runs towards Rosie and a number of younger Mobians.

Hope: COMING, ROSIE! GOOD-BYE, MR. ROBIAN! AND THANK YOU!

Dialogue Box: THE END